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STATE PLEASE PASS TO PEACE CORPS

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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR HONORS WORLD WAR II HEROES AND EMPHASIZES AN  
ENDURING PARTNERSHIP

11. SUMMARY. On October 20, the Ambassador addressed President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and other dignitaries at the 65th anniversary commemoration of the Leyte Gulf Landings in Leyte Province, in Eastern Visayas. The Ambassador reminded the audience of the shared history between the United States and the Philippines and emphasized the United States' commitment to maintaining an enduring partnership with the Philippines. During her first visit to the province, the Ambassador also toured America-based APAC's new call center, a hopeful sign of an economic upswing for the region, and visited 21 new Peace Corps trainees from two regional clusters. During a live radio interview, the Ambassador highlighted the U.S. role in disaster relief in the wake of Tropical Storm Ondoy and Typhoon Pepeng. Throughout her trip, the Ambassador integrated social networking media by recording video clips for YouTube and sending Twitter updates. END SUMMARY.

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HONORING A SACRED PROMISE  
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12. An enthusiastic crowd greeted the Ambassador in Palo, Leyte to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Leyte Gulf Landings at the MacArthur Landing Memorial National Park. It was on this site in 1944 that General Douglas MacArthur fulfilled his promise to return to reclaim the Philippines from the Japanese, making Palo the first liberated town. The theme of this year's celebration was QA Salute to the Valor of Our Last Living Heroes.Q Prior to the start of the program, the Ambassador spoke warmly to local media of the historical significance of Leyte Landings. The Ambassador also spoke with Governor of Leyte Carlos Jericho Petilla and Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilberto Teodoro.

13. The program began with the arrival of the Guest of Honor, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Arroyo inspected her Armed Forces and then led the Ambassador and other dignitaries in a wreath-laying ceremony at the shrine of General MacArthur. Each wreath was symbolically given to the people of the Philippines from the people of the United States, Japan, Australia and Canada, respectively. In her remarks, the Ambassador emphasized how the anniversary of the Leyte Landings marked the day in which Qour two nations honored a sacred promise and dedication to one another and their pact for liberty for their peoples.Q After the ceremony, the Ambassador spoke with American World War II veterans who had traveled to Leyte in honor of the occasion.

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PEACE CORPS IN LEYTE  
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14. Prior to the anniversary celebration, the Ambassador visited 21 Peace Corps trainees, from both the Tanauan and Palo clusters, during their Waray language training. (Waray is spoken in the provinces of Leyte, Samar, Northern Samar, and Biliran.) The trainees, working on education or environmental projects, were in their ninth week of pre-service training, which prepares trainees to serve effectively and to be self-reliant, to use the local language, to understand Filipino culture, and to live safely in the

Philippines. Trainees taught the Ambassador some Waray phrases, which she used during her remarks at the Leyte Landings ceremony and during her live radio interview. With the help of the trainees, the Ambassador ended her visit by recording a brief video message, subsequently posted on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8Nm-gHossM>), highlighting her visit to the region and the work of the Peace Corps volunteers.

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A LITTLE BIT OF AMERICA  
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15. Following her visit with the Peace Corps, the Ambassador toured the newest APAC call center facility in Palo, Leyte. The facility is one of four in the Philippines operated by APAC, which is headquartered in Bannockburn, Illinois. APAC's other three call centers are located in Metro Manila. The Leyte facility is the first call center in Eastern Visayas and represents the start of a new era of development in the region after worsening poverty trends over the past few years. During her visit, the Ambassador met new and veteran staff members from as far as Manila and observed real-time customer calls from the U.S. The Leyte facility, which can accommodate 1,000 agents, has hired 700 employees since opening in March 2009. The Ambassador ended her tour by recording another short video message for YouTube highlighting APAC's success (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TixhOTVQvCY>).

16. After the anniversary ceremony, the Ambassador stopped for lunch at American franchise Shakey's Pizza Parlor. The Ambassador met the franchise owner and thanked the restaurant staff for all of their hard work.

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TALKING TO EASTERN VISAYAS  
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17. During the Ambassador's live radio interview with DYVL-AM, the top radio station in Leyte, she spoke warmly of the historical significance of the Leyte Landings and emphasized the strong and enduring relationship between the United States and the Philippines. She also highlighted U.S. disaster assistance to the Philippines in the wake of Tropical Storm Ondoy and Typhoon Pepeng, through our military cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). The assistance included family food packets, clothing and water, in addition to financial donations through USAID. The Ambassador emphasized U.S. respect for Philippine sovereignty and explained U.S. troops were in the Philippines at the invitation of the Philippine Government to support and advise the AFP and to help develop and sustain the AFP's counterterrorism capacity.

KENNEY